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Congressman Bruce Braley: Working to Expand Iowa Chiropractic Care

Serving as a Member of the Subcommittee on Health under the Committee on Energy & Commerce, and playing a significant role in Health Care Reform

- As a Member of the Subcommittee on Health, Rep. Braley is in a good position to fight for Iowa chiropractors as Health Care Reform legislation moves towards passage.

Rep. Braley has inserted multiple pieces of legislation that relate to chiropractic services and will raise Medicare reimbursements to chiropractors into the House Health Care Reform bill – HR 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act:

- The House bill will include **Braley language to move Medicare reimbursements towards a system that incentivizes based on high-value care.** The language calls for an Institute of Medicine (IOM) study on fundamentally changing the Medicare reimbursement system to one that incentivizes high-value care, then Congress gets an up-or-down vote on whether to enact the recommendations or not. Iowa currently has very high-value care, and would benefit under such a system.
- The House bill also includes **Braley language for a second IOM study of the accuracy and validity of geographic adjusters under Medicare** (the Geographic Practice Cost Indexes and the Wage Index). If the adjusters are found to be inaccurate, then any communities which have been unfairly impacted by Medicare's geographic adjusters will see immediate corrections. **\$8 billion is provided to go to communities which need immediate adjustments to their providers' reimbursements** because of the unfair impact of the geographic adjusters.
- The House bill includes Braley language from his H.R. 2891, the Access to Frontline Health Care Act, to **create a new student loan repayment program to recruit chiropractors and other health care professionals to Iowa** and other rural states.
- The House bill **extends the 1.0 Floor for the Work Geographic Practice Cost Index by 2 years.** Rep. Braley has fought to extend this Floor, as it ensures more adequate Medicare reimbursements for Iowa providers under Part B.

Authored and Introduced HR 2891, the Access to Frontline Health Care Act, to ensure that communities have access to chiropractors. This legislation was endorsed by the American Chiropractic Association.

- This legislation will help make certain that patients can receive comprehensive care, and incentivizes the transition to an interdisciplinary approach to health care. The Access to Frontline Health Care Act will help place chiropractors in underserved areas by creating a new student loan repayment program, known as the "Frontline Providers Student Loan Repayment Program," to pay chiropractor's student loans if they practice in needy areas.
- **Rep. Braley successfully inserted language from this bill into the House Health Care Reform bill.** This provision will make chiropractors eligible for a student loan repayment program by practicing in underserved areas.

Working to ensure that the House Health Care Reform legislation includes "non-discrimination" language, so that insurance cannot discriminate against certain providers

- Rep. Braley is working to add "non-discrimination" language to the House Health Care Reform bill, and is leading a multi-Member letter to Speaker Pelosi encouraging her to support "non-discrimination" provisions.
- **The House Health Care Reform bill, which passed the House, does now include this non-discrimination language.**

In both the 110th and 111th Congresses, cosponsored legislation to ensure chiropractic care is available at all Veterans' Medical Centers

- Rep. Braley is a cosponsor of HR 1017, the *Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act*. This bill ensures chiropractic care is available to veterans at VA medical centers and clinics to be carried out at: (1) no fewer than 75 medical centers by December 31, 2010; and (2) all medical centers by December 31, 2012.
- In the 110th Congress, this bill passed the House on May 23, 2007, with Rep. Braley's support, but stalled in the Senate.

In the 110th and 111th Congresses, cosponsored legislation to make chiropractic services a permanent part of the TRICARE program

- Rep. Braley is a cosponsor of HR 484, the *Chiropractic Health Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act*. This bill would make coverage of chiropractic health care services and benefits a permanent part of the TRICARE program.

Introduced HR 2844, the Medicare Payment Improvement Act, to fundamentally change Medicare reimbursements, and reimburse chiropractors and other providers based on high-value care. Inserted similar measures into the House Health Care Reform bill

- This legislation would make a fundamental change in Medicare Part B by finally reimbursing providers more for high quality care and low cost. This would incentivize high-value care, instead of the current "fee-for-service" system which only incentivizes greater volume. Iowa providers offer very high-value care, and would benefit significantly under this proposal.
- **Rep. Braley successfully inserted similar language into the House Health Care Reform bill.** This language mandates an Institute of Medicine (IOM) study on the best ways to change Medicare's formula to reimburse based on high-value care. Congress will then get an up-or-down vote to accept the IOM recommendations, and finally move Medicare towards a value-based reimbursement system, which is more in line with the high-value care that Iowa medical professionals already provide.

Authored and Introduced HR 2201, the Medicare Equity and Accessibility Act of 2007, which would expand access to chiropractic care and other health care. Inserted similar measures into the House Health Care Reform bill

- This legislation would increase Medicare Part B reimbursement rates for chiropractors and other providers in Iowa and other rural states in order to help Iowa retain health care professionals and improve patient access to quality healthcare. This legislation would institute a permanent floor on the geographic adjusters under Medicare Part B, directly increasing the Medicare Part B reimbursement to Iowa chiropractors.
- **Rep. Braley successfully inserted language into the House Health Care Reform bill** for an IOM study of the accuracy and validity of geographic adjusters under Medicare. If the adjusters are found to be inaccurate, then the providers in any communities which have been unfairly impacted by Medicare's geographic adjusters will see immediate corrections. \$8 billion is provided to go to communities which need immediate adjustments to their providers' reimbursements because of the unfair impact of the geographic adjusters. Many experts speculate that Medicare reimbursements in Iowa are unfairly low due to inaccurate measurements within the Medicare formula.

Working to replace the Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR), which unfairly lowers Medicare reimbursements to chiropractors and other providers under Part B.

- Rep. Braley has repeatedly called for the elimination of the SGR. The House recently passed legislation which replaces the SGR with a new formula that will not result in unfair cuts, and encourages coordinated, innovative care.

Successfully overrode a veto by President Bush in the 110th Congress to avoid and correct a 10.6% cut to Medicare reimbursements, which would have taken effect on July 1, 2008.

- Due to Medicare's flawed method of calculating reimbursements under the SGR, Medicare reimbursements were due to be cut by 10.6% on July 1, 2008 if Congress did not act. Rep. Braley successfully helped pass H.R. 6331, the *Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act of 2008*, which prevented this cut to Medicare. Rep. Braley even helped pass the bill over President Bush's veto.